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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by Carmelite NGO, Gray Panthers, Human Lactation Center, International Council of Psychologists, International Peace Research Association, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, International Public Policy Institute, League of Women Voters of the United States, Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, Solar Cookers International, Grail, UNANIMA International, World Christian Life Community, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Statement*

1. Climate change is now recognized as the crisis of the twenty-first century affecting not only the lives of the present generation but reaching into the future to dramatically change the environmental space of generations to come. A cross-cutting reality, climate change obstructs the achievement of sustainable development, exacerbates poverty and forces affected populations to migrate in increasing numbers. Together with varied socio-economic factors, it triggers civil conflict and the violence against women that comes in its wake.

2. While everyone will suffer the consequences of climate change, regardless of race, caste, ethnicity, sex, and level of income, when climate change strikes, women of all ages are in the frontlines — women and girls, in rural and urban areas, in the global South and the global North will be the first to suffer its consequences.

3. Indeed, climate change presents a severe and disproportionate threat to the dignity, livelihood, and, in some cases, even the very survival of women and girls, undermining their basic rights in direct violation of human rights law, for example, their:

- Right to survival, security and health (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 3).
- Right to sources of livelihood — food, water, energy, shelter, economic security (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 25).
- Right to participation — decision-making opportunities and information (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, articles 21 and 27).
- Right to capacity-building — education and income generation opportunities (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, articles 23 and 26).

4. However, in the face of these threats, women remain resilient. They are central to a community's response to the consequences posed by climate change — as practical problem solvers and nurturing caregivers, responsible leaders and effective policy advocates.

5. Leaders in all sectors of society should recognize the above facts. Women should be taken on as equal partners in a country's efforts to respond to the climate crisis, and to that end, ensured of equal access and participation in education, training, science and technology, including full employment and decent work.

Recommendations

Planning

- Women leaders should be equally represented in planning for the mitigation of the slow and rapid onset of climate change.
- They need to participate at all levels of decision-making about plans for adapting to its consequences, including National Adaptation Plans for Action (NAPAs).

* Issued without formal editing.

Finance

- In allocating funds for climate change projects, special consideration should be given to small scale programmes managed by women that aim for social and ecological benefits over the long term.
- Capacity-building needed to access available financial resources should be provided to women managing small businesses and agricultural enterprises.

Education

- Funding for the education of women and girls should ensure that they receive training in science, math and finance.
- Women should be given equal access to training for policy positions.

Information dissemination

- Planning should be undertaken and resources set aside to ensure that women are included in a community's climate change information network.
- Specifically, they should have access to information about planning and the financial and technological resources available for disaster prevention, mitigation and adaptation to the consequences of climate change.

6. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has stated that all stakeholders should ensure that climate change and disaster risk reduction measures are gender responsive, sensitive to indigenous knowledge systems and respect human rights. Women's right to participate at all levels of decision-making must be guaranteed in climate change policies and programmes.